

Chronically Online

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I will likely forever have a love hate relationship with the internet. For as much retardation it has spawned, it's also been the source of some of my fondest memories.

I come from a relatively poor & rural background. My family sort of jumped up to the upper middle class over time, but that was later in my childhood. I never actually got internet access until about 2011. That wasn't very uncommon where I'm from either, most gaming was still split screen at that point & only a few kids I knew had Xbox Live or something.

My mom got internet because she had to do some college stuff online, I ended up inheriting an old Dell laptop from her. I think the first thing I remember on the internet was using a website, the name of which eludes me, that basically takes you to a random webpage every time you click a button. This was still the era of truly "surfing the web." The internet was something to be explored. YouTube wasn't nearly as big as it is now, but it was on the rise & had a number of creators jumping on board. Channels like Rooster Teeth, PewDiePie, Michinima, GameSpot, etc. They all filled my time after school so much that I began to memorize which channels would upload what on certain days & at certain times.

I feel my childhood should be explained somewhat. I was basically always alone from the age of 10. Without betraying too much about my personal & family life, my siblings are much older than I & my mother figure was basically the only constant person in my life. She was a nurse & due to changes in the medical industry at the time she had to go back to school. This meant that her time was spent at work, at school, or sleeping. I was more or less left to my own devices in an empty house. I think a lot of my "autistic" type behaviors I have stem from this.

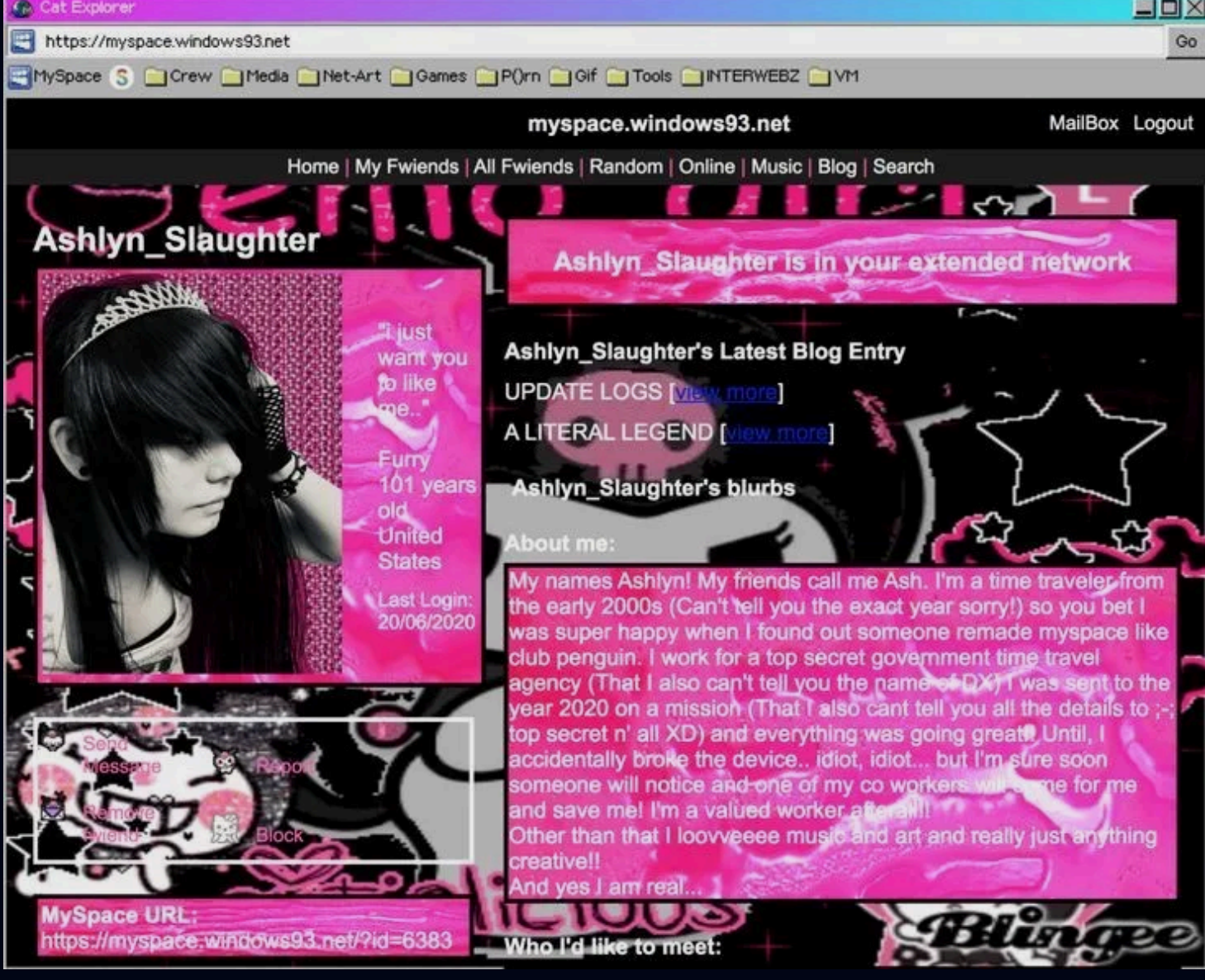
My mom didn't want me outside when she wasn't there, naturally. I often ignored this to hang out with my friends in the neighborhood but for the most part stayed in. I would spend my time watching movies on DVD, watching the local channels on the poverty cable bundle, & surfing the web.

Gaming forums, YouTube comment sections, and Xbox Live parties are where I had most of my interactions. It seems crazy nowadays, but the internet was small enough back then that you would often recognize people on YouTube that you had a conversation with in another comment section & it wasn't weird to say hello. Even the biggest content creators would interact heavily with their fanbases on a personal level. It truly felt like a community. Obviously, the internet wasn't nearly as commodified as it is now. I think there was like one ad for every ten videos you watched - a stark contrast to YouTube today where each video has potentially dozens of ads.

The most memorable online experiences I had at this time was on Xbox Live. Halo 4 & Modern Warfare 3. I loved talking to people on voice chat, I actually cleaned my neighbors lawns for a month so I could buy a pair of Turtle Beach headphones. Before that I just enjoyed listening to the other players yell at each other, even if I couldn't join in.

Around 2013, I ended up moving. It wasn't actually super far but far enough to be a foreign land to a grade schooler. I was actually a pretty shy kid so making friends, or the anxiety it entailed, wasn't a big priority for me in this new land. It was also around this time I ended up getting an iPad for christmas. The iPad just made surfing the web easier & also opened me up to the (at the time) new social networking services like Instagram & Kik. Facebook was still big at the time, but it was for old people. Going into middle school, everyone had a cringy Instagram profile with bad pictures put through a dozen or so filters.

The internet also influenced my music taste at this time. I won't include the goofy parodies & meme songs like Your Favorite Martian, but I did stumble across Nightcore one day. Through the random nightcore videos I would find bands like Hollywood Undead, Green Day, Paramore, etc. Being into these bands, and the other middle schooler rock music, sort of led me into the Emo community. I was a angsty 13 year old, don't blame me lol.



Also around this time I got iFunny. I don't know why I got it, I think I just randomly downloaded it off the appstore. This marked my introduction to the "Offensive" side of the internet. Liveleak videos, racial slurs, bullying fandom fags, all the good stuff. I made a few friends on here, and we would usually talk on Kik at that time. That would also be introduction to things like politics. The Great Meme War of 2016 is still a fond memory of mine.

I sort of separated from the internet for a time, but ended up coming back to iFunny in about 2018. The internet was a very different place by then, and iFunny was one of the few organic communities still extant. Coming back on a little older & more mature led to me meeting a lot of good friends. This was the early days of the Discord era. The iFunny zeitgeist of 2018 to 2020 did a lot to formulate my humor today.

2019 was the beginning of a big shift in society, people like Ted Kaczynski were becoming popular & the BoogLARP movement was growing. Leading into 2020, the pandemic, wild fires, political violence, & such really created an apocalyptic atmosphere. It felt like the world was ending & the youth had no outlet but to post memes about it online.

2020 was probably the peak year of my life so far. Everything going on in society on top of a great spiritual & psychological shift in myself. In fact, a lot of my generation that grew up online had a similar experience. This was only compounded by everyone being locked inside during COVID. I made a lot of my closest friends during this timeframe, based around things like music & fashion that was almost exclusive to the online sphere. American Football, 100 Gecs, Bladee, Ecco 2k, Negative XP, etc. I still wear long sleeve striped shirts under t-shirts.

These friends were the ones I tended to have deeper conversations with, lost to dead Discord servers & forgotten to time. I suppose it's easier to open up to someone when they're really just a pfp & a username in the end.

The internet was also just generally fun at this time. iFunny was fun, Tiktok was fun, all of it. The Zoomers that grew up online finally reached an age where they became the major content creators & it was great.

I sort of left the internet again in 2021 when I went to boot camp. Being in the military left me little time to spend hours in voice chats & make memes. Truth is, I do miss those days. It's definitely a "tears in rain" sort of feeling for me. It may just be me, now an adult with real world responsibilities, but it feels like most of my internet friendships aren't nearly as close as the ones from before. I'm not stuck inside & isolated like 2020, but I still miss opening discord to see what goofy argument broke out or sitting in VC until 3am queuing random videos into the audio player.

I don't think the internet affected me as negatively as it did a lot of other people, and it certainly benefited me more than anything. I love the internet, and the little cyber communities I had the opportunity to be a part of. I'm not sure what the point of this post was, I just felt compelled to get these words out because they've been on my mind for the past couple years.

[This explains it well.](#)


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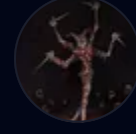
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